

**A report on**  
**Blaengwawr Primary School**

**Gwawr Street**  
**Aberaman**  
**Aberdare**  
**RCT**  
**CF44 6YP**

**Date of inspection: February 2026**

**by**

**Estyn, His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education**  
**and Training in Wales**

## About Blaengwawr Primary School

Name of provider	Blaengwawr Primary School
Local authority	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Language of the provider	English
School category according to Welsh-medium provision	None
Type of school	Primary
Religious character	None
Number of pupils on roll	221
Pupils of statutory school age	167
Number in nursery classes	26
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average (The national percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals over a three-year average in Primary is 21.7%)	30.2%
Percentage of pupils identified as having additional learning needs (a) (The national percentage of pupils identified as having an additional learning need in Primary is 9.2%)	3.6%
Percentage of pupils who speak Welsh at home	0.0%
Percentage of pupils with English as an additional language	4.3%
Lead partner in Initial teacher education	No
Date of headteacher appointment	04/01/2021
Date of previous Estyn inspection (if applicable)	09/01/2017
Start date of inspection	09/02/2026

Data reported is sourced from the latest available Pupil Level Annual School Census. These figures may be slightly different to those observed during the inspection.

Further information is available from the Welsh Government My Local School website:  
[mylocalschool.gov.wales](https://mylocalschool.gov.wales)

- a. The term 'additional learning needs' is being used to describe those pupils on the SEN/ALN register of the school.

## Summary

Blaengwawr Primary is a happy, inclusive school, where staff treat pupils with high levels of care and respect. Pupils engage positively with adults and their friends and show support and understanding towards each other. These strong relationships ensure that most pupils feel safe and behave well.

The headteacher provides effective leadership. A robust approach to self-evaluation and school improvement has secured purposeful changes that have had a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Teaching is purposeful and engaging. Teachers have high expectations, work effectively with teaching assistants and use questioning skilfully to develop pupils' thinking. This ensures that most pupils, including those adversely affected by poverty and those with additional learning needs (ALN), make suitable progress. However, feedback does not consistently identify clear next steps to enable pupils to refine and improve their work.

The curriculum is broad and well-designed. It offers stimulating learning experiences that support pupils to develop a wide range of skills in authentic contexts. Pupil involvement in shaping the curriculum is at an early stage and pupils have limited influence over what and how they learn.

Most pupils develop their literacy skills well and make good progress in reading. By Year 6, many demonstrate a love of reading and discuss their favourite authors confidently. Most pupils also develop secure mathematical skills through an effective approach that enables them to explore concepts practically before moving to more abstract understanding. Opportunities to develop pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills are limited.

Teachers ensure that pupils understand how to use technology safely. They provide suitable opportunities for pupils to use a few digital tools. Overall, however, pupils do not develop a broad enough range of digital skills or apply them regularly across the curriculum.

Governors draw effectively on their varied experience and skills to support and challenge leaders. They scrutinise important aspects of the school's work, including pupil attendance. Although overall attendance is improving, rates of persistent absence remain a concern.

## Recommendations

We have made three recommendations to help the school continue to improve:

- R1 Provide opportunities for pupils to influence their learning and respond to feedback to improve their work.
- R2 Improve provision to develop pupils' digital and mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- R3 Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

## What happens next

The school will draw up an action plan to address the recommendations from the inspection.

## Main evaluation

Blaengwawr Primary is a happy and inclusive school at the heart of the community. It promotes pupils' personal, social and emotional development well. Staff establish positive, caring relationships with pupils. They provide effective support for pupils' well-being and create an inclusive environment in which pupils feel safe, valued and respected. This ensures that most pupils, including those adversely affected by poverty, make suitable progress in their learning and develop as friendly, thoughtful and empathetic individuals. Most pupils behave well in class, around the school and at playtimes. They are polite and respectful to each other and adults.

The school's work is characterised by strong leadership and reflective self-evaluation. Leaders set high expectations for themselves and staff, model effective collaboration and promote a cooperative approach to their work. They work closely with staff to share good practice. This collaborative approach has led to purposeful improvements in important aspects of the school's work and has had a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Staff receive purposeful professional development linked carefully to school improvement priorities. Recent training has supported the introduction of a new approach to develop pupils' mathematical skills, which allows pupils to explore their learning through practical activities to gain a deeper understanding of more abstract concepts. This has had a positive impact on pupils' progress in mathematics across the school. While pupils apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum frequently and purposefully, provision for developing their mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills are limited.

During their time at school, most pupils make appropriate progress in developing their literacy skills. The school's emphasis on attentive listening ensures that pupils engage readily with learning. Most pupils talk confidently about their work and take advantage of opportunities to extend their vocabulary. They develop sound reading skills that they use successfully to access and enhance their learning across the curriculum. Pupils work well with their peers and ask thoughtful questions contributing sensibly to class discussions.

Leaders and staff place high priority on developing pupils' Welsh language skills. Many teachers are strong Welsh language role models and use engaging approaches to teaching the language. This results in pupils having positive attitudes towards learning Welsh and most pupils develop their Welsh language speaking skills suitably.

Teachers ensure that pupils understand the importance of internet safety and how to use technology securely. Many pupils use a range of simple digital tools effectively to enhance their work across the curriculum. However, teachers do not provide sufficient

opportunities to support pupils to develop a broad enough range of digital skill or to enable pupils to apply them regularly to deepen their understanding.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils well. Staff integrate the school values effectively and ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of the heritage and the ethnic diversity of their local area and Wales. Teachers provide a range of engaging experiences that capture pupils' interests effectively. The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development successfully. This enables most pupils to show consideration for others, respect differences and celebrate individuality. However, teachers do not provide opportunities for pupils to influence their learning.

Most teachers use a range of effective teaching strategies and develop learning at a suitable pace. They provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to discuss their thinking such as when working collaboratively with a partner. Teachers work closely with highly effective teaching assistants to provide purposeful support for pupils, including those with ALN. This helps pupils to engage well with their learning and to make progress. Many staff use effective questioning and encouragement to support and challenge pupils' learning. Where teachers provide helpful verbal feedback, pupils use this information effectively to improve their work. However, feedback does not identify clear next steps in pupils' learning or enable them to refine and improve their work.

Younger pupils benefit from frequent opportunities to play, explore and influence their learning inside and outside the classroom. Staff create purposeful and engaging learning environments that nurture pupils' curiosity and independence. Through effective use of class learning areas, most pupils develop their creative, communication and physical skills well.

The school supports pupils' participation and enjoyment in learning beyond the school day effectively. Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities that develop their creative and physical skills well. The school's provision for pupils to have a voice and influence their learning and school improvement is at an early stage. While staff have established a suitable range of pupil voice groups recently, pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to make suggestions or develop their leadership skills.

Provision for ALN is effective. Leaders ensure that individual development plans identify pupils' learning needs clearly. This enables teachers to provide tailored support and suitable learning activities. High skilled teaching assistants offer effective support for pupils with ALN and work purposefully with external agencies to strengthen provision for pupils' well-being and learning. This means that most pupils who require additional support make sound progress against their personal targets.

Leaders and governors monitor the work of the school well. The governing body is well-informed and committed to supporting the school. Governors ensure that resources are allocated efficiently to support school improvement priorities and promote effective teaching and learning. Leaders use grant funding purposefully to provide targeted programmes that strengthen pupils' literacy, numeracy and emotional resilience.

Governors have a strong understanding of the school's context, its strengths, and priorities for improvement. They receive regular updates from leaders about progress towards identified improvement areas and visit the school to monitor progress. This helps them to act effectively as 'critical friends' and maintain an appropriate balance between support and challenge.

The school promotes attendance actively through reward systems and assemblies and senior leaders monitor rates of attendance appropriately. The school collaborates purposefully with a range of outside agencies to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality, and this impacts positively on pupil attendance overall. However, the number of pupils who are persistently absent has increased and remains a cause for concern.

### **Additional information**

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not give any cause for concern

The school's arrangements for site management do not give any cause for concern

The school has appropriate arrangements for promoting healthy eating and drinking

Leaders and governors manage the school's finances appropriately, including the use of the pupil development grant.

## Evidence base of the report

Before an inspection, inspectors:

- analyse the outcomes from the parent/carer and pupil questionnaires and consider the views of teachers and the governing body through their questionnaire responses

During an inspection, inspectors normally:

- hold a meeting with parents/carers to hear their views on the school and its effectiveness
- meet the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders (where appropriate) and individual teachers to evaluate the impact of the school's work
- meet pupils to discuss their work, to listen to them read and to gain their views about various aspects of their school
- meet groups of pupils in leadership roles, such as representatives from the school council and eco-committee
- visit a broad sample of classes, including learning support groups and undertake a variety of learning walks to observe pupils learning and to see staff teaching in a range of settings, including classrooms, support groups and in outdoor areas
- where appropriate, visit the specialist resource base within the school to see pupils' learning
- observe and speak to pupils at lunch and break times and at a sample of after-school clubs, where appropriate
- attend assemblies and daily acts of collective worship
- look closely at the school's self-evaluation processes
- consider the school's improvement plan and look at evidence to show how well the school has taken forward planned improvements
- scrutinise a range of school documents, including information on pupil assessment and progress, records of meetings of staff and the governing body, information on pupils' well-being, including the safeguarding of pupils, and records of staff training and professional development

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection

## Appendix 1: Numbers – quantities and proportions

The report makes references to different quantities and proportions e.g. ‘*most pupils...*’ or ‘*very few pupils...*’. We use these terms to describe quantities and proportions as outlined in the table below:

nearly all =	with very few exceptions
most =	90% or more
many =	70% or more
a majority =	over 60%
half =	50%
around half =	close to 50%
a minority =	below 40%
few =	below 20%
very few =	less than 10%

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales))

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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